

Samiti of Deptt. of Industrial Policy and Promotion is concerned no meeting could be held during last three years as it was under the process of re-constitution. However meeting of Committee was held on 19.2.2001. It has always been the endeavour of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry to convene its meeting regularly.

Share of Assam in tea export

566. SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

- (a) the export of tea during 1998-99, 1999-2000 and the current year and the share of Assam tea therein; and
- (b) whether exports of tea from Assam suffer from certain impediments exclusive to that State and the North Eastern Region, including the delay in issue of certain quarter related certificates, if so, the steps taken and proposed to be taken to remove such impediments?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) Tea is exported mainly in blended form either in bulk or in packets. In the process of blending, origin of tea is lost and hence export of tea by origin cannot be ascertained. The quantity and value of tea exported from India during the last two years and the current year are as follows:

Year	Quantity (Mn. kg.)	Value (Rs. Crores)
1998-99	205.86	2191.84
1999-2000	192.44	1932.66
2000-2001 (April-December)	155.58	1374.32

(b) A few exporters of tea including Eastern India Shippers' Association had brought to the notice of the Tea Board Government that the Directorate of Plant Protection, Quarantine and Storage had stopped issuing Plant Quarantine Certificates from 12.10.2000.

The matter was accordingly taken up with the Directorate of Plant Protection Quarantine and Storage, Deptt. of Agriculture who have since resumed the system of issuing Plant Quarantine Certificate for tea. There is, therefore, no particular problem on this front at present.

Withdrawal of tariff concessions by US

567. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the newsitem appearing in the 'Hindustan Times' dated 9th February, 2001 captioned "Soda ash war; Bush signals hardline on Indo-US Trade";

(b) if so, what are the details thereof indicating whether Government have officially responded to a US threat to withdraw tariff concessions of \$ 2.8 billion worth of Indian exports;

(c) if so, what are the seven key categories of Indian exports on which US Trade Representative has stated to withdraw tariff benefit; and

(d) what remedial steps Government propose to take to solve Indo-US trade problems?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) A statement is enclosed. (See below)

(d) The Indo-US trade problems are duly taken up with the concerned US authorities with a view to their early resolutions to mutual satisfaction.

Statement

Categories of Indian Export on which tariff concessions has been withdrawn by US

USTR through Federal Register Notice dated 19.1.2001 has invited public comments on modification of duty free treatment for certain products imported from India (303 product lines at the 8 digit level).